

Nursing home praised for compassion, care

To the editor:

When our mother was 92, she suffered a major heart attack and was not expected to live through the night. She wanted to go home to die, so we brought her home. However, she got stronger with each passing day, and with the help of a caregiver, the VNA, and our younger sister we were able to keep her in her home for the next six months.

At the end of that time, decisions had to be made, and she went to live at Sullivan County Healthcare. It was the best decision for our mother and she flourished there.

She loved the interaction with the other residents, went to all the activities, and told us numerous times how friendly the staff was. When people asked how she liked it there, she would smile and say, "I'm content." Between the two of us, we visited with her almost every day for the next three years, and so it was with great interest that we read the articles and editorial in your paper regarding the nursing home.

What we saw during these past three years was a hard-working, dedicated staff that treated the residents like family. There is no doubt that there are issues that need to be addressed, but from what we have observed most issues revolve around the shortage of caregivers, not overstaffing. On our mother's floor, there are 42 residents, 17 of those residents need to be fed. That means that they require total care, needing to be toileted, bathed, and turned every two hours. Most of the other residents also need to be helped with activities of daily living.

For some to assume that not as much staff is needed because the census is low is an irresponsible assumption. What these people fail to realize, is that many of the residents need more comprehensive care. The residents are at their most vulnerable, and should not be treated as if they were simply a business transaction.

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Granted, running the nursing home is a business, but let's not forget that it's a business that deals with human lives. Our mother died on Jan. 24 and our sincere thanks go out to all those who cared for her these last three years. Everyone, from maintenance, housekeeping, the activities aids, nursing assistants and nurses were wonderful. Their compassionate care, friendliness, and dedication helped our mother feel at home. The county should be proud that they have such a facility to provide

for those for whom this will be their last home, and let everyone remember that it is now their home.

Cutting staff would be a disaster for the safety and well being of the residents. For the editor to ask for cuts in staffing suggests that he just reads numbers on a piece of paper and has spent little time, if any, at the facility. We urge the commissioners and delegates to think long and hard before making the decision to cut staff.

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